

NEW ROOSEVELT GENERATIONS
RETRACE A FAMOUS TREK

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A Sentimental Safari in 'T. R.' Tradition

Half a century ago, Theodore Roosevelt, rip-snortingest of U.S. Presidents, shook the post-presidential quiet most ex-chief executives seek and set off on a famous safari into darkest Africa. With him went his son Kermit and a huge party. Their hunt, headlined in U.S. newspapers ("Hippo and Rhino Fall to Roosevelt") proved quite as stirring to Americans as had Teddy's headlong exploits in office.

The vigorous tradition has lasted in the Roosevelt family and decades later Teddy's descendants set out to renew the zest of his African trek. Mounting a smaller, swifter expedition, Teddy's grandson Kermit with sons Kermit Jr. and Jonathan made a sentimental return to the area where T.R. had stalked the big ones. Today's Africa still abounds in the savage beauty he described: "vast grassy plains . . . rivers rushing out of the heart of the continent through the sadness of endless marshes; forests . . . where death broods in the dark and silent depths." Big game flourishes as nowhere else on earth. The younger Roosevelts, carrying some of Teddy's old gear, relived many of their intrepid forebear's experiences. "I was less than 3 years old when T.R. died," says Kermit Roosevelt. "This has given to me something approaching intimacy with him."



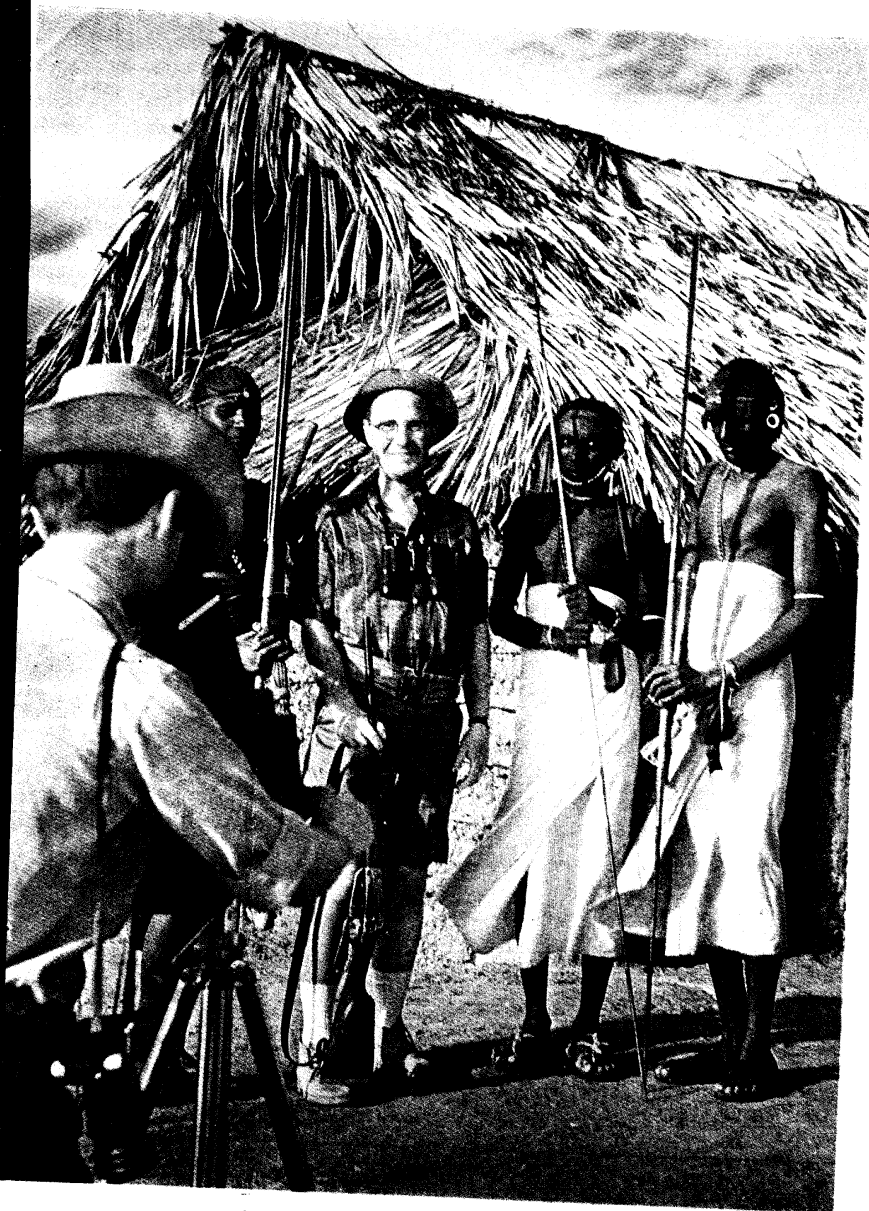
Bag of Buffalo, Then and Now

Atop a big buffalo he had just brought down in its tracks with a single shot, T.R. and son Kermit sat proudly in old photo above, taken beside a swamp near the Kamiti River. At right the Kermit Roosevelts, son and father, of the more recent safari duplicate the pose atop a Cape buffalo killed in the Narok area.



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ROOSEVELT SAFARIS CONTINUED



Sturdy Stands with Sharp-speared Natives

As he stood with Samburu spearmen outside a thatched building near camp (*above*), Kermit Roosevelt was photographed by Kermit Jr., using the Graphlex camera Teddy had carried on safari. LIFE's Terence Spencer recorded the whole scene. Kermit held T.R.'s old rifle and wore the gun

belt his grandfather had worn when he stood 50 years earlier with Nandi warriors (*right*). With Teddy gleefully riding as "beater," the natives had just killed the lion which lies in foreground—"a scene of as fierce excitement as I ever hope to see," enthused the old Rough Rider.

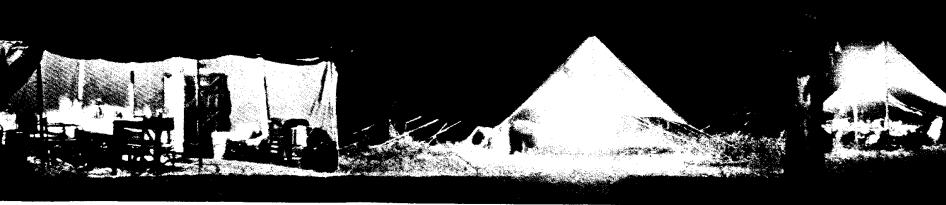
Conveyances Changed with the Times

The last word in African transport in 1909 was the locomotive of the Uganda Railway, prop for the noted picture at left showing T.R. and Frederick Courteney Selous riding the cowcatcher on what Teddy described as "the most interesting railway in the world." This was his

seat during most of the trip from Mombasa to Kapiti Plains over land converted to a game reserve. Below, the recent trek's leaders sit on their Land-Rover. From the left, white hunter Terry Mathews, Jonathan Roosevelt, Kermit Roosevelt, Kermit Jr., Krister Aschan, head white hunter.



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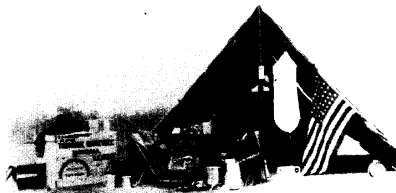


ROOSEVELT SAFARIS

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Remote, but Not Really like Roughing It

Back in 1909 T. R., the ex-President, hooted at his accommodations (*right*) as being far too effete—as “almost too comfortable for men who knew camp life . . . in the Rockies.” But Kermit’s expedition (*above*) was not ashamed of its comforts. It had mattresses, carpet, even same-day laundry service. Where Teddy’s gear was borne on the backs of 200 native porters, that of his descendants was carried neatly in two Land-Rovers and two trucks.



Family Hunters over Horns

Neither Roosevelt expedition confined its hunt solely to museum specimens. The Grant’s gazelle shot by Kermit (*above*) was needed for fresh meat for the party, as was Teddy’s buck kob (*right*). Though he was an ardent conservationist all his life, T. R. scoffed that “to protest all hunting . . . is softness of head, not soundness of heart.”





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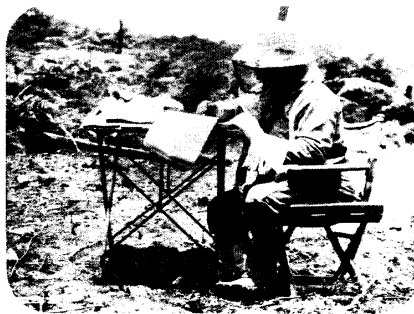
WEAVERS OF FINE CARPETS AND RUGS SINCE 1845

Between the Volleys, Bread-and-Butter Business of Writing Books

In their fascination with Teddy Roosevelt's incredible vigor in public affairs, historians have tended to overlook his achievements as a writer, nowhere better displayed than in his accounts of the African trip. Each evening after the day's hunt, when most men would ease up to a cool drink, Roosevelt would pull up to a camp table and begin "paying for my fun," in fulfillment of a contract with Scribner's for a book and several magazine articles. *African Game Trails*, his narrative of the safari, is a work of considerable literary merit, crackling with vigorous description, like this of his first rhinoceros: "The big beast stood like an uncouth statue, his hide black in the sunlight . . . a monster surviving over from the world's past. . . ." The rhino charged, and Teddy dropped him just 13 paces from where he stood.

In the intervals between shooting and writing, T.R. read voraciously from a library of pigskin-bound miniature books he carried in his kit—Darwin, Mahan, Carlyle, Dickens, Voltaire (in the French), Milton and Mark Twain. "Perhaps the most essential article in T.R.'s kit," notes his grandson, Kermit, whose own book—tentatively entitled *African Game Trails Re-Visited*—is in the works, "was his eyeglasses—eight or 10 pairs scattered strategically through his gear."

But a big game hunt could only temporarily absorb T.R.'s restless energies. Shortly after his return, he was furiously back in partisan politics, bolting the Republican party to run for President as the "Bull Moose" candidate.



Wearing mosquito net, high boots and gloves as protection against marauding insects, Teddy (top) doggedly spent his evenings chronicling the day's hunt, as grandson Kermit was to do at Shaba camp fifty years later.

